

May 21, 2002

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**PRIORITY NEEDS FOR FY 2002-03:
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING**

The Department of Regional Planning is submitting its priority needs and funding requirements for fiscal year 2002-03. These priority needs will, if funded, enable the department to provide enhanced levels of service for the Board of Supervisors, Regional Planning Commission, unincorporated communities, landowners, and the general public. The primary areas of priority needs are shown in the attachment. The programs will affect every supervisorial district and effectuate the strategic goals and objectives of the county through service excellence, and organizational effectiveness.

We are requesting much needed assistance in our **Certificate of Compliance (COC) processing and investigation (\$542,000)**. This is our #1 priority for next year. A substantial portion of this cost will finance technical contractors in the area of title search/examination. Additional funding will help us to avoid negatively impacting numerous clients, landowners, builders, contractors, and the real estate industry by ensuring a prompt and thorough review of the cases. As you know in the past year, we have made significant progress in our investigation and resolution of the 1403 properties affected. The expenses have been substantial and necessary to resolve land use issues for involved citizens and the County. This request is to supplement the current year funding. We feel that our business retention efforts will be improved through our efforts to enforce the county regulations and State Map Act as related to the COC and lot line adjustment processes.

To facilitate business retention efforts in the unincorporated County area, implementing the strategic goals of service excellence and organizational effectiveness, we request funding for our second priority need: **Zoning Code Streamlining and Updating (\$340,000)**. Changes and modifications to the ordinance over the last 40 years have made it very difficult to interpret and more complex to read for the public and other jurisdictions. A new design and methodology is needed to streamline and update the various repetitive and sprawled (i.e., spread out) provisions of the ordinance and to modernize this document by including current land uses and displacing old, archaic. This represents a long overdue, important, vital program for the County.

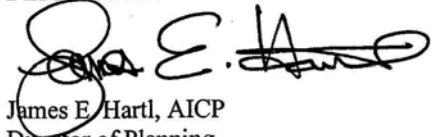
Another priority need, **Restoration of Public Counter Field Offices Counseling (\$435,000)**, seeks to provide a renewed service level to both the downtown office, the Land Development Coordinating Center (LDCC), as well as the nine district offices that we share with the Department of Public Works. Funding will save travel time for constituents and provide more local planning advisory services for all county residents. Staffing at the Public Counter, the LDCC, will be extended to a full day and field offices will be staffed full days. Much of the discontent with the waiting time at our downtown public information counter will be greatly reduced with the full day operations made possible with this funding. Service for the 30,000 yearly telephone calls, 300 One-Stop counseling sessions, and 675 client appointments will also benefit from this greatly needed additional funding. The development community and our small “mom and pop” businesses support this program priority.

The fourth priority need, **Strategic Workforce Planning and Database Administration (\$450,000)**, will fund necessary staff to secure, protect, and administer to the complex geographic information and local area network databases. These very large and valuable digital formats require on-going and very technical expertise. The proposed staffing will reduce network downtime and potential security breaches for valuable county data, thereby improving service excellence and organizational effectiveness. Additional staffing will be used to implement the recently developed Strategic Plan in performance measurement, employee development, succession planning, and emergency preparedness. Funding will greatly enhance organizational effectiveness and fiscal responsibility through cost avoidance.

As we have stated in the past, it is our strong belief – which is reiterated in our Strategic Plan — that planning programs and information technology will be increasingly vital in the new millenium. Considering the positive contributions that these funding requests will make to the strategic initiatives of the county and the total effectiveness of the county, we strongly recommend your consideration and funding of the priority needs listed herein for next year.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James E. Hartl", is written over a circular stamp that contains the text "DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING".

James E. Hartl, AICP
Director of Planning

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Office
Executive Office

**DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING
FISCAL YEAR 2002-2003 PRIORITY NEEDS**

Program	<i>Gross Appropriation</i>	<i>Revenue/IFT</i>	<i>Net County Cost</i>	<i>Budgeted Positions</i>
Certificates of Compliance Investigation and Implementation	\$ 542,000	\$ 0	\$542,000	3.0

Impacts the Current Planning Program and portions of the Land Use Regulation Program. The cost reflects utilization of contract title examiners to complete the current Certificate of Compliance (C of C) investigation, and creates a new section to accommodate the workload (currently experiencing a six-month backlog) for new, incoming C of C's and Lot Line Adjustments, and to conduct hearings on disputed land divisions. Failure to fund this critical need will cause increased overtime usage, extend time to process cases, and increase the risk of employee fraud because of lack of separation of duties. It will also leave the department ill-equipped and understaffed to complete corrective actions, and unable to prepare for hearings, civil lawsuits, and criminal court trials. These legal, mandatory corrective actions include Notices of Intent to Record Violations, hearings to resolve issues, filing of Notices of Violation on properties illegally subdivided, and the pursuit of legal action resulting from these corrections. Funding this critical need will restore quality services that are responsive to citizens and beneficial to the County (**service excellence**). The C of C-investigation and disposition of its 1403 cases will be completed by 6/30/05. The independent section to process Certificates of Compliance and Lot Line Adjustments will be on-going.

Zoning Code Streamlining And Updating	\$ 340,000	\$ 0	\$340,000	1.0
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Impacts the Land Use Regulation and Current Planning Programs and reflects the utilization of consultant services and one staff person to define and make recommendations for the design and methodology to automate, update, and streamline the zoning ordinance. This effort will modernize provisions of the Ordinance to make it less complex to read and interpret, thereby reducing the County's future liability due to misinterpretation, as well as assisting economic revitalization efforts in the County. Failure to fund this need will hinder DRP from complying with two Board motions directing all affected departments to identify and utilize streamlining mechanisms to assist in development of affordable housing and to stimulate the economy by easing the path to development. Funding this need will allow DRP to meet the Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies of designing structures and systems for seamless service (**service excellence**), and providing convenient, efficient, and effective service (**organizational effectiveness**). This represents funding for the first year of an estimated three-year project.

Program	<i>Gross Appropriation</i>	<i>Revenue/IFT</i>	<i>Net County Cost</i>	<i>Budgeted Positions</i>
Restoration of Field Offices And Public Counter Hours/ Business Retention	\$ 435,000	\$ 0	\$ 435,000	6.0

Impacts the Land Use Regulation Program and reflects funding to expand DRP's program of zoning counseling and planning advisory services to the public in field offices, such as Arcadia, Antelope Valley, Florence/Firestone, Santa Clarita, Calabasas, South Whittier, and East Los Angeles where demand surpasses current staffing resources. This funding will also restore service hours to 1994 levels at DRP's downtown public information counter (Land Development Coordinating Center) by extending hours for walk-in customers from 1:00 – 6:00 p.m. to a full day starting at 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. At present the department's public counter disseminates general planning advice, information, and counseling to over 14,000 people countywide and 8,500 at the downtown office alone. Extended field office hours will help to distribute this to local areas to reduce wait time, traffic, and improve air quality at the Hall of Records. Funding will also assist in providing service excellence to the 300 one-stop counseling sessions and the approximate 675 client appointments conducted annually at the Land Development Coordinating Center. Funding this effort will positively impact the department's ability to provide convenient, timely, accurate and courteous service (**service excellence**), and to promote continuous quality improvement (**organizational effectiveness**). This is a continuous, on-going program which is strongly supported by our clients and the public, as well as Public Works.

Strategic Workforce Planning And Data Base Administration	\$ 450,000	\$ 0	\$ 450,000	5.0
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This critical need impacts the Information Technology, Administration, and Support programs, and reflects funding for five staff to provide increasingly complex database and LAN administration, and to provide necessary assistance in the areas of Strategic Plan implementation and monitoring, emergency preparation planning, employee development programs related to strategic workforce planning, compilation of performance measurement statistics, and fiscal studies. It also reflects funding for a departmental strategic-plan-implementation consultant. Funding of this vital program will greatly enhance departmental efforts to improve employee preparedness and safety, to improve our network recovery time (**organizational effectiveness**), to effectively respond to fiscal and management audits (**fiscal responsibility**), and to implement our own Strategic Plan (**service excellence**). Strategic Plan implementation is estimated to be a five-year project. All others are on-going.

TOTAL	\$1,767,000	\$ 0	\$1,767,000	15.0
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